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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002828

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CROCKER'S AUGUST 21 MEETING WITH SHEIKH
SATTAR

REF: BAGHDAD O-I 8/16/07

BAGHDAD 00002828 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In an August 21 meeting with the Ambassador, Sheikh Abdul Sattar, the leading tribal figure in Anbar province, stressed the importance of Anbar tribal leaders in improving security and unifying the local citizens of Anbar. Sattar lauded the separation of politics and religion, specifically citing the role of the tribes in Anbar in reducing sectarianism. Sattar played down differences between the Tawafuq bloc and tribal elements, while seeking support for his own party, the Iraq Awakening Movement (SAI). Sattar said provincial elections should be held soon to improve the political situation in the province. Referring to his relationship with the PM, he criticized Maliki's advisors, noting that they are not giving the PM a realistic view. Sattar spoke positively about increased engagement with the U.S. in his planned international visit to Washington later this year, and asked that the U.S. open a consulate and expand opportunities for investment. End Summary.

TRIBAL VALUES AND ANBAR CONFERENCE

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met with Sheikh Abdul Sattar Bezia al-Rashawi on August 21. Sattar stressed that Anbar tribal leaders are holding together the "fabric of society" in Anbar, and noted the role his new party, the Iraq Awakening Movement (SAI), is playing in this effort. He stressed the influence of tribes in curbing terrorism and eliminating sectarianism and discussed the Anbar Tribal Conference of August 16, which 400-500 tribal and political party officials attended (reftel). Sattar added that the Tawafuq Accord Front is trying to represent Sunnis in a "good way" in the Council of Representatives. The Ambassador thanked Sattar for his role in working to bring security and stability to Anbar, and noted that the upcoming Anbar Forum (to be held in September in Ramadi), which Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih is expected to attend, would serve to highlight economic and social progress. Regarding security in Baghdad, Sattar noted that "if we can control the Baghdad districts of Adhamayah and Sadr City, then we can control sectarianism." He added that there is a strong Sunni presence in Baghdad and that he would like to work with the tribes and the U.S. to secure Baghdad.

TRIBALISM VS. ISLAM

¶3. (C) Sattar emphasized the importance of the tribes in mitigating religious extremists in Anbar. He stated "tribalism is not the same (as religion)," stressing that religion and politics should be separate. He added there are

Shia and Sunni on both sides of the extreme, and noted the tribes should play a role in reducing this sectarianism. He said, however, the central government is not helping with this effort.

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS NEEDED SOON

¶4. (C) Sattar discussed bringing a "new face" and political process to Anbar to improve representation in the province. Specifically, he called for provincial elections soon, which he said would help his own tribal unity efforts as well. He noted the January 2005 elections resulted in a provincial government that was not truly representative. New elections would restore popular support.

RELATIONSHIP WITH TAWAFUQ AND THE PRIME MINISTER

¶5. (C) In response to the Ambassador's question regarding the relationship between the Anbari tribes and the Tawafuq Front, Sattar said they have built a "constructive relationship." He referenced the role of his party, SAI, in moving Iraq to a "new phase" in the future. He further noted his hope to build democracy and relationships with the central government through new provincial elections.

¶6. (C) Regarding the relationship between Tawafuq and the Prime Minister, Sattar added the PM needs to meet the demands of Tawafuq, but stressed his interest in national reconciliation. He said the PM does not have good advisors around him, noting that "they don't give him the reality."

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

¶7. (C) Sattar noted that his tribe and party have a good

BAGHDAD 00002828 002.2 OF 002

relationship with Coalition Forces and he hopes the U.S. will consider opening a consulate in Anbar. He spoke with enthusiasm about his upcoming IVP visit to Washington later this year. He also mentioned a celebration that will take place on September 14, 2007 commemorating the Anbari tribes' fight against al-Qaeda (AQI) and encouraged U.S. participation at this event.

¶8. (C) Sattar stressed that he would like to attract foreign investment and tourism from the U.S., U.K., and Gulf countries to Anbar. He mentioned potential natural gas resources that could be cultivated and cement factories that could become functional with foreign investment. Sattar also discussed ways to strengthen cultural and educational exchanges between the U.S. and universities in Anbar.

¶9. (C) Comment: Sattar is a rising political star and is the founder of Sahawat al-Anbar al-Iraq (SAI) or "Iraq Awakening Council," comprised of approximately forty tribes that have pledged to fight al-Qaeda in Iraq. The SAI is gaining prominence in provinces outside of Anbar. Sattar has a close relationship with coalition forces and PRT Anbar, and expressed his desire to make it even closer. While relatively young (born September 1971) and with only a high school education, Sattar is a forward-thinking leader with political aspirations. His outreach efforts to tribes in southern Iraq and his relationship with Shia groups indicates that he is willing to work with both sides to bring about national reconciliation in Iraq. He clearly sees himself as a potential national political figure.

CROCKER